certain hitech items from India into Russia using debt repayment funds from Ist January, 1997 with a view to accelerate the bilateral trade in general and hitech items in particular.

Sitting up a Centre in Andhra Pradesh by Spices Board

1153. SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Spices Board proposes to set up a centre for the development of spices in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to impart training to farmers to prevent over usages of pesticides to boost chilly export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Spices Board has a regional office at Hyderabad which is headed by an officer of the rank of Deputy Director. This office, in close coordination with Department of Horticulture, Andhra Pradesh is undertaking activities for the quality improvement, improvement of post harvest practices and development of Spices in Andhra Pradesh.

(c) Some of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to prevent over usage of pesticides to boost chilly exports include :

(i) Introduction of integrated pest management programme in collaboration with Regional Agricultural Research Station (PARS), "LAM, Guntur" to reduce pesticide residue in chilly.

(ii) Conducting programmes in Guntur, Khammam, Warrangal, Karimnagar and Prakasam districts for creation of awareness amongst the chilly growers on quality management and improved post-harvest handling of chillies with emphasis on need based application of pesticides.

(iii) Supply of HDPE sheets at subsidised rates to chilly growers to overcome problem of fungal infestation, resulting in the occurence of afflatoxing in chillies.

Export Growth and Bank's Credit to Exporters

1154. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of export and import growth including Balance of Payment position during Sixth and Seventh Plan period;

(b) the position in view of part (a) above upto December 31, 1996 of the Eighth Plan period;

(c) whether economic liberalisation policy and rupee devaluation time to time during the above period had helped to stabilise India's Balance of Payment position in terms of dollar;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the exporters are facing any problem in view of increase the volume of trade due to Bank's credit restriction, more competition in liberal economy and some other problems; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government to meet the challenge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) As per DGCI and S, data, the average annual rate of growth of exports and imports valued in US dollars during the 6th Plan (1980-85), 7th Plan (1985-90) and 8th Plan (1992 to April-Dec. 1996) are as follows :

Plans	Growth Rates (In % age)	
	Export	Import
VI Plan	4.7	6.5
VII Plan	11.6	8.2
VIII Plan (Upto Dec., 1996)	13.9	14.9

As per RBI data, the average level of current account deficit as percentage of GDP is placed at 1.3% for Sixth Plan, 2.2% for Seventh Plan, and at about 1.3% for Eighth Plan.

(c) and (d) The economic liberalisation policies including trade liberalisation and exchange rate policies have helped strengthening India's export base and maintaining export competitiveness abroad besides strengthening balance of payments position.

(e) and (f) Responding to the need for adequate export credit, efforts have been made to provide export credit in rupees and in foreign currency at interest rates linked to LIBOR at pre and post shipment stages. Commercial Banks are required to lend a minimum of 12% of net bank credit to the export sector. Flow of credit to the export sector is being monitored by RBI. The Government is constantly interacting with the RBI to ensure adequate availability of credit to the exporters both in foreign currency and rupee terms at competitive rates.

Incentive to Export Sectors

1155. DR. G.R. SARODE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to announce any incentives to boost export;

(b) if so, the time by which these are likely to be announced; and

(c) the sectors that are likely to be given priority for the export?